

Stanovništvo Konavala by N. Kapetanić and N. Vekarić is a series of two books, volumes 1 and 2. This is the summary in English, printed in the back of the 2nd book.

The book is in the Croatian language except for this summary and captions for the many charts and diagrams, which are in both languages. The 2nd book is a compilation of the various census records that were recorded in Konavle, from 1536 to 1880.

THE POPULATION OF KONAVLE

SUMMARY

The primary constant that is valid of Konavle, regardless of which period of the region's history one discusses, is its borderline position. Konavle has been a point of contact or collision between the Western and Eastern Roman Empires; between Dubrovnik and Duklja, Serbia, and Bosnia; between the Dubrovnik Republic and Turkey; and between Croatia and Montenegro. Konavle has served as field of battle between Romans and Illyrians, and between Slavs and Romans. For centuries Konavle Catholics (*Latini*) waged battles against the Vlach and Montenegrin population of the Dubrovnik hinterland. Even with the creation of nations nothing changed but the names of the participants. In Konavle there has been conflict between Christians and Pagans, Catholicism and Orthodoxy, and contact with the Church of Bosnia and Islam. Konavle formed the border between wealthy bourgeois Dubrovnik and the poor herdsmen in the hinterland. It was a borderland in the fullest sense of the word: a boundary between civilizations, cultures, religions, nations, states.

In order for us to be able to understand the political turmoils, religious conversions, and stormy history of Konavle before it came under the rule of the Dubrovnik Republic, it will be necessary to distance ourselves from contemporary categories of thought. Many details from Konavle's past are incomprehensible when looked at from today's point of view; many occurrences and moves simply could not possibly happen today. For example, the people's attitude toward religion was weaker than today. Then it was more like being a member of a political party, something which a person accepted sometimes out of faith, sometimes out of necessity, but most often for opportunistic reasons, and not something that is acquired at birth and considered given and unchangeable (as it is today). At that time faith was bargained for. Had the Dubrovnik authorities given 1,000 perper to the Ser-

bian ruler Nemanja, the bishops in his state would have recognized the Dubrovnik metropolitan. If Dubrovnik had been less stingy and given Miroslav (also a Serbian ruler) 300 perper, Bishop Donat would have returned to Ston, and the religious history of the Pelješac peninsula would have taken a different course. In fact, only the clergy was religiously determined, while states and landholders were left to calculate. Through membership in a particular church it was easier for them to protect their interests or the position they had attained. But the common people, which comprised the enormous majority of the overall population, was detached, particularly in such borderlands, where changes were frequent. In the feudal system of that period they accepted religious labels as a condition of survival and would change them according to the particular ruler in power. Contrary to what we might imagine from our first impression, the mixing of Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and the Church of Bosnia in the Konavle region was not caused by mass migrations. It was certainly difficult for vulnerable strata of the population to go through such changes. Many gave in to change when necessary, but some fought, died, or emigrated. Still, the great majority of the population, the amorphous masses, remained and adapted to new conditions.

If it had not been for the Romans, Konavlians today would probably be descendants of some surviving Illyrian tribe and certainly would not be called Konavlians. If it had not been for the Slavs, Konavlians today might be Italians or members of some non-existent nation descended from the Romans who settled the area. If it had not been for the Nemanjić dynasty they probably would be what they are today: Catholics and Croats. If it had not been for the Ragusans, perhaps today they would be Orthodox Serbs or more probably Bosnian Muslims, because in that case the Turks would have most likely invaded that region as well.

But let us put all guesswork aside. Things happened the way they happened. These processes, the numerous currents that coexisted along the border, at the crossroads of various influences and interests, brought forth no winner for centuries. For centuries the history of Konavle was periodically interrupted; the scales would lean for a moment on one side, a moment on the other, but no side succeeded in tipping the balance. This state of affairs yielded a Konavlian conglomerate, in which traces of many ethnic layers were visible — Illyrian, Roman, and Slavic — a conglomerate which had grown out of conflicts: that between Christians and Pagans, and that between the Western, Eastern, and (momentarily) Bosnian churches. This conglom-

erate was eventually inherited by Dubrovnik, the decisive victors. The arrival of the Ragusans brought this centuries-long process to a halt, and defined the Konavlians just as they are today in terms of religion and ethnicity: as Catholics and Croats.

To be sure, things did not unravel this way simply by chance. For, if there is another Konavlian constant that we can place beside "borderline", then that would be Dubrovnik. Konavle and Dubrovnik enjoy a long-standing mutual relationship. Perhaps Epidaurus (Cavtat) even gave Dubrovnik its name, but the legend of the origin of Dubrovnik demonstrated at an early stage the intensity of this relationship, which was obviously powerful even when the center of today's southern Croatian region was Epidaurus, while Dubrovnik was a small village or, perhaps, a transit port. Even when, by chance of fate, Konavle and Dubrovnik found themselves on opposite sides of the border, that relationship was not broken. Konavlians relied constantly upon Dubrovnik for sources of existence. At the same time, Dubrovnik continuously looked upon Konavle as a constant source of food, and so the Ragusans were the primary organizers of agricultural production there regardless of who had sovereignty over the territory. Dubrovnik and Konavle formed one natural economic whole. This cannot be said for any of the other rulers of Konavle, and this fact was probably decisive in the region's eventual fate. All other rulers had a particular interest in Konavle, but not a decisive one. Neither the survival of Rome or that of Serbia depended upon Konavle. It was, however, a necessity for Dubrovnik's survival. Konavle was Dubrovnik's strongest bulwark. If Dubrovnik had not succeeded in acquiring Konavle, it would have experienced the fate of Epidaur, or the fate of Kotor.

Life under these two constants - the border and the desirable but vulnerable Dubrovnik - was a life of high risk. No State in that range of forcefully balanced faction-ridden subjects, where changes in public law were a common occurrence, was capable of offering the kind of protection that would allow Konavlians to live in continuous security. Not even Dubrovnik was capable of offering Konavle such protection, even in the first half of the fifteenth century, when international borders were finally defined. For this reason the population took refuge by the most effective, and probably the only possible, means of survival: creating a system of protection based upon self-organization, autonomy, closedness, and intense internal cohesion. This inward orientation would constantly come into conflict with the opposite tendencies of central State governments, which with greater or lesser resist-

ance or attacks (e.g. the 15th-century landholders' uprising, the so-called Konavle Revolt in the late 18th century) would end in compromise - simultaneous integration and autonomy. Dubrovnik's influence upon Konavle became especially noticeable in the class structure ("great houses" - middle class - poor - orphans, or the Cavtat shipowners' class, which was an extension of Dubrovnik's urban middle class), and was also revealed during the period of redemption of the peasantry, when new local landowners fervently assumed the function of the former landed nobility.

Konavle's long-lasting life of self-sufficiency was the cause of great inertness. Few processes were started in Konavle, but many came to an end there. Konavle in times of war differed tremendously from Konavle in times of peace. War brought about changes, and in peaceful times these processes were simply finalized and turned into inertia, conservatism, and resistance to any form of change. Due to this fact, Konavlians to this day have preserved their identity better than any other micro-unity in the Dubrovnik region; also due to this fact, however, Konavlians have done the least to influence the course of their own history.

Konavle's autonomy can be seen in the uniqueness of practically all elements that make up its population. Konavle is a micro-unity that differs fundamentally even in microrelations, in the relations of the small state of Dubrovnik or the Dubrovnik region of today, where Konavlians exhibit completely different characteristics from the inhabitants of similar agrarian zones such as the Dubrovačko primorje or the peninsula of Pelješac. Konavle's uniqueness is also exhibited in the system of customs, the goal of which was to ensure the prosperity of the family (e.g. customs that strive to prevent the division of property), and the organization of the household (promoting large extended families in which the head of household had great authority). The importance of the collective and its precedence over the individual is revealed in the understanding of the "homeland" as the bearer of identity. A man who moved into the household of his wife's family traditionally gave up his surname and adopted the name of the household. The closedness of this society, as typical characteristic of agrarian regions, was even more pronounced in Konavle: it was especially difficult for newcomers to gain acceptance, and just as difficult to adapt to their new surroundings. The intensity of migration was insignificant, so that the population generally varied according to transitional processes that would change depending upon the overall situation. The periods of "hope" in Konavle (and in the Dubrovnik Republic) were the fifteenth century, the second half of the six-

teenth century, the mid-eighteenth century, the mid-nineteenth century, and to some degree the third quarter of the twentieth century. The periods of "hopelessness", brought on by a variety of causes, covered the first half of the sixteenth century (epidemics, great selection of the population as a result of overpopulation caused by the wave of refugees that followed the fall of Bosnia and Herzegovina), the entire seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth century (Ottoman wars, Hajduk activities, earthquake), the first quarter of the nineteenth century (Napoleon's assault on the European equilibrium), the late nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century (economic crisis), as well as the end of the twentieth century (the fall of communism and the Yugoslav military offensive).

Economically, Konavle was generally oriented towards agriculture and to a lesser degree towards the raising of livestock. The exception to this was Cavtat, which exhibited characteristics of an urban way of life, where from the late sixteenth century there developed an intensive shipbuilding tradition. This was actually the result of a constructive method of elimination of the surplus in manpower that grew after a likely flow of refugees fleeing Bosnia and Herzegovina after its fall at the end of the fifteenth century. Cavtat's success in shipbuilding grew with time and with the intensity of migration to Cavtat. A somewhat greater influx of population, which has lasted until today, began in the nineteenth century when the amount of resources broadened with the establishment of local administrative centers (first in Cavtat, and then in Gruda), the construction of the railroad, the development of tourist industries, and the building of the airport. But Cavtat only partially absorbed the population surplus that developed in Konavle during demographically desirable periods. The remainder of that surplus were forced to leave and find their way elsewhere. The main absorbent of "surplus" Konavlians was the city of Dubrovnik, and during greater crises they moved out of the Dubrovnik region entirely (to America and, in the second half of the twentieth century, Zagreb). Emigration always surpassed immigration. Therefore, Konavle has tended towards poverty more than it has towards prosperity.

Konavlians' particular attachment to the earth and agricultural production, in addition to their stress on the patriarchy, has effected a great number of indicators: the extremely predictable seasonal variation in the number of conceptions (which reaches its low point during the period of heaviest fieldwork), the great amount of attention given to ensuring that men are married, the tendency toward early marriage in times of negative demo-

graphic trends, the putting off of marriage in times of population surplus, and the difficulty that widows have in remarrying, which became less harsh after the adoption of the institution of levirate.

Typical migrations to Konavle were individual, final, economic, voluntary, and most commonly occurred as a result of marriage. These moves were of low intensity, but they constantly occurred, and in that continuity their influence was powerful enough to gradually change customs, habits, language, and other cultural, social, and economic characteristics. Of particular importance to these migrations were women, who in this patriarchal context moved more frequently than men. It was these women, in fact, who were the main ties between different cultural complexes as well as the carriers of migrational "viruses". Migratory currents were also influenced by the change in state boundaries (upon the fall of the Dubrovnik Republic, the number of immigrants from Dalmatia rose dramatically), as well as changes in lifestyle, especially the valorization of the sea in economic life, which was the cause of a new tendency in which inhabitants of mountain villages moved down to settlements adjacent to the sea.

In opposition to this type of economic migration, many migrations were motivated by noneconomic, most frequently political, factors. These were most commonly temporary flights during dangerous periods of change (fifteenth century, Herzegovinian uprising in the second half of the nineteenth century). There were also the non-voluntary migrations of criminals forced to flee across the border in order to avoid punishment or revenge after having committed murder. Just as Konavlian criminals regularly fled to Herzegovina and Boka Kotarska, criminals from those regions sometimes took refuge in Konavle. Elements of force were often related as well to the movements of peasants from one landholder's property to another (relocation of the peasantry), although such transfers most commonly were carried out according to a mutual agreement between lord and peasant.

Besides permanent migrations, temporary migrations were also important, because temporary arrivals often were members of the elite strata of the population and continuously worked to educate the local people. During the Dubrovnik Republic administrative officials came from the families of the nobility. Members of those houses also served as priests, physicians, military officers, etc. Under the Austrian government, which had a highly developed administrative system, many judges, clerks, teachers, physicians, and other government employees from all regions of the Austro-Hungari-

an empire passed through Konavle, in addition to members of the clergy and the military, who mainly came from Croatian lands.

In spite of all these migrational processes, the population of Konavle, thanks to its dominating characteristics, remained remarkably stabile and static - more so than any other region of the Dubrovnik mainland, more so than any of Dubrovnik's closer islands. Even today there are many autochthonous inhabitants of Konavle (more than 80 % in areas other than Cavtat). Today's population basically comprises five strata: people whose ancestors lived there before the Dubrovnik era (the majority of families from the interior of Konavle); the second stratum are those whose ancestors arrived after the fall of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the third is small in number and comprises people whose ancestors came during the period of the Dubrovnik Republic; the fourth, somewhat larger, stratum consists of descendants of nineteenth-century immigrants, who came mainly from the north, and the fifth is the youngest, which includes immigrants from various regions who settled in Konavle after 1918.